

## **The Resource Conservation Challenge**

EPA Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response/Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances

**Geographic location or area of activity:** National

**Description of activity:** OSWER and OPPTS together have designed, launched and are implementing robust and far-reaching partnership programs to protect and conserve natural resources through the Resource Conservation Challenge (RCC). The RCC consists of many collaborative efforts which will result in source reduction of toxics and increased recycling, including:

Plug-In To eCycling is a partnership between EPA and electronic manufacturers and retailers to offer consumers more opportunities to donate or recycle their used electronics. Partners create different approaches to give individuals eCycling options. They offer online takeback or trade-in programs, create partnerships with local organizations to facilitate collections, collect electronics at retail locations or support local recycling events with cities and municipalities.

In 2007, partners recycled or reused over 47 million pounds of electronics from consumers- mostly computers, televisions, and cell phones- via their voluntary collaborative efforts or through new partnership programs. Conservatively, the green house gas savings of recycling these electronics equal taking nearly 32,000 cars off the road each year. Since the Plug-In program's inception in 2003, partners have recycled over 142 million pounds of electronics via collaborative and voluntary efforts.

WasteWise is a partnership program with over 1400 partners from industry, states, universities and local governments committed to reducing and recycling wastes.

Through RecycleMania EPA works with the National Recycling Coalition (NRC) on an annual campus recycling contest. Three hundred colleges are now involved in the competition. Schools participating in the Recyclemania competition recycled nearly 21,000 tons of materials in 2007.

Greenscapes is a partnership program focusing on environmentally friendly landscape design, construction, and maintenance – from large commercial sites to homeowners. Over 160 members, including the US Green Building Council, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Nursery and Landscape Association, Home Depot, and various city, county, and state governments signed up to practice green landscaping methods.

CARE and carpet industry – OSW was one of the co-founders of the Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE) in 2002; CARE is composed of carpet manufacturers, the Carpet and Rug Institute, state and federal agencies, and other interested parties. Its main objective is to find alternative uses for discarded post-consumer carpet that comprises 2% of all the waste going into landfills across the country. CARE set a goal of diverting 40% of the post consumer carpet from landfills by 2012, primarily by recycling. CARE 2007 Annual Report reported 260.9 million tons diverted from landfills in 2006.

C2P2 is a partnership program with over 150 partners encouraging the reuse of coal combustion products (C2P2); a program encouraging waste reduction with a goal of

increasing coal fly ash from 14 million tons in 2002 to 18.6 million tons by 2011, Partners include DOE, FHWA, USDA and USWAG. These programs have resulted in outstanding metrics in environmental conservation. For example, the C2P2 Program resulted in climb in the recycling rate for coal combustion products from 32% in 2001 to 43% in 2006.

**Interagency partners:** Numerous federal and state agencies, including. DOE, DOT and USDA.

**Local partners:** Local governments, community groups, NGOs, Fortune 500 companies, industry associations.



**Activity URL:** <http://www.epa.gov/rcc>